

#### Notice of Objection Period for the Gold Butterfly Project

The Draft Record of Decision (ROD) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Gold Butterfly Project are now available. The project is located on the Stevensville and Darby Ranger Districts of the Bitterroot National Forest. The project area is located east of Corvallis, MT in the Sapphire Mountains and is between Burnt Fork Creek to the north and St. Clair Creek to the south. The Responsible Official for the project is the Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor.

The selected alternative would improve landscape resilience to disturbances (such as insects, diseases, and fire) by modifying forest structure and composition, and fuels; provide timber products and related jobs; reduce chronic sediment sources in the Willow Creek watershed to improve water quality and bull trout habitat in the long-term; and restore or improve key habitats such as meadows, aspen, and whitebark pine. The selected alternative includes vegetation management through commercial harvest, non-commercial thinning, and prescribed burning. There would also be construction of system and temporary roads needed to complete vegetation management activities as well as a variety of road improvement measures to reduce sediment inputs into Willow Creek. A modification to the selected alternative has been included that would retain old growth status in all treatment units.

The selected alternative would also approve a site-specific Forest Plan amendment to plan standards for thermal cover and allowing portions of third-order drainages within the project area to be managed at Elk Habitat Effectiveness values less than plan standards.

The Draft ROD and Final EIS are available on-line at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/nepa/fs-usda-pop.php/?project=51486> or at the Stevensville Ranger District or Forest Supervisor's Office. Additional information can be obtained from: Jeff Shearer, Interdisciplinary Team Leader, 1801 N. First St., Hamilton, MT 59840 or 406-375-2608.

#### How to file an Objection and Timeframe

The Gold Butterfly Project is subject to the objection process pursuant to 36 CFR 218, subparts A and C. Objections will only be accepted from those who have previously submitted specific written comments regarding the proposed project during scoping or other designated opportunity for public comment in accordance with §218.5(a). Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted timely, specific written comments regarding the proposed project unless based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunities.

Objections, including attachments, must be filed via mail, express delivery, or messenger service: (to Objection Reviewing Officer, USDA Forest Service, Northern Region, 26 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula, MT 59804); FAX to (406) 329-3411; email to [appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us](mailto:appeals-northern-regional-office@fs.fed.us); or by hand-delivery (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays at USDA Forest Service, 26 Fort Missoula Road, Missoula, MT 59804).

Objections must be submitted within 30 calendar days following the publication of this notice in the Ravalli Republic. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the time to file an objection. Those wishing to object should not rely upon dates or timeframe information provided by any other source. The regulations prohibit extending the time to file an objection.

The objection must contain the minimum content requirements specified in §218.8(d) and incorporation of documents by reference is permitted only as provided in §218.8(b). It is the objector's responsibility to ensure timely filing of a written objection with the reviewing officer pursuant to §218.9. All objections are available for public inspection during and after the objection process. Names and contact information (including addresses and e-mail addresses) submitted with objections will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

At a minimum an objection must include the following (36 CFR 218.8(d)): 1) The objector's name and address, with a telephone number, if available; 2) a signature or other verification of authorship upon request (a scanned signature for e-mail may be filed with the objection); 3) when multiple names are listed on an objection, identification of the lead objector (verification of the identity of the lead objector shall be provided upon request); 4) the name of the proposed project, the name and title of the Responsible Official, and the name(s) of the National Forest(s) and/or Ranger District(s) on which the proposed project will be implemented; and 5) a description of those aspects of the proposed project addressed by the objection, including specific issues related to the proposed project if applicable, how the objector believes the environmental analysis or draft decision specifically violates law, regulation, or policy; suggested remedies that would resolve the objection; supporting reasons for the reviewing officer to consider; and 6) a statement that demonstrates connection between prior specific written comments on the particular proposed project or activity and the content of the objection.

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